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"The Matter Was Never Resolved": The *Casta* System in Colonial New Mexico, 1693–1823

ADRIAN BUSTAMANTE

Several descriptive and demographic studies have been published on the Spanish colonial *casta* system,[1] although an analysis of how the

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1. "Casta" will be used in this essay instead of the term "caste." Casta was utilized by the Spanish from the sixteenth century through the early part of the nineteenth century as a term denoting ethnic categorization, while the term caste connotes more of a categorization of class as when used to describe the traditional social system of India. For descriptive studies of the Casta system, see Nicolás León, *Las Castas del Mexico Colonial o Nueva España* (Mexico: Talleres Graficos del Museo Nacional de Arqueologia, Historia, y Etnografía, 1924). This is an early work, but most of the information is still current. L. N. McAlister, "Social Structure and Social Change in New Spain," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 43 (August 1963), 349–70. Peggy K. Liss, *Mexico Under Spain, 1521–1556: Society and the Origins of Nationality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975). Magnus Mörner, ed., *Race and Class in Latin America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), and Mörner, *Race Mixture in the History of Latin America* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1967). For demographic studies of colonial New Mexico, see Janie Louise Aragon, "The People of Santa Fe in the 1790s," *Aztlan* 7 (Fall 1976), 391–417; Antonio José Rios-Bustamante, "New Mexico in the Eighteenth Century: Life, Labor and Trade in the Villa de San Felipe de Albuquerque, 1706–1790," *Aztlan* 7 (Fall 1976), 357–90; Alicia V. Tjarks, "Demographic, Ethnic, and Occupational Structure of New Mexico, 1790: The Census Report of 1790," *The Americas: The Academy of American Franciscan History* 35 (July 1978), 45–88; Oakah Jones, Jr., *Los Paisanos: Spanish Settlers of the Northern Frontier of New Spain* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979).

Table 1
Ethnic Mixture of Castas

1. Español × India = Mestizo (NM)
2. Español × Mestiza = Castiza (NM)
3. Español × Castiza = Torna a Español
4. Español × Negra = Mulato (NM)
5. Español × Mulato = Morisco
6. Morisco × Español = Albino
7. Albino × Español = Tornatrás
8. Mulato × India = Calpamulato
9. Negro × India = Lobo (NM)
10. Lobo × India = Cambija
11. Calpamulato × India = Jivaro
12. Indio × Cambija = Sambahiga
13. Mulato × Mestiza = Cuarteron
14. Cuarteron × Mestiza = Coyote [According to census reports, in New Mexico the term coyote included the mixture of Mestizo × Indio and that of Spanish × Indian.]
15. Coyote × Morisca = Albarazado
16. Albarazado × Saltatras = Tente en el Aire
17. Mestizo × India = Cholo
18. India × Mulato = Chino (NM)
19. Española × China = Cuarteron de China
20. Negro × India = Sambo de Indio
21. Negro × Mulato = Zambio
22. Genízaro – Cambujo × China = Genízaro en Mexico [In New Mexico, the term genízaro had a somewhat different meaning.]

Composite list from Nicolás León, *Las Castas del Mexico Colonial o Nueva España* (Mexico: Talleres Graficos del Museo Nacional de Arqueologia, Historia, y Etnografía, 1924).

system functioned in a frontier province like New Mexico has not been done. To fill that gap, this essay examines the implementation in New Mexico of the legal plan to keep elements of a polyethnic society clearly identified and stratified so that the mixed progeny of Spaniards, Indians, and blacks could be kept in socially subordinate positions.

That this boundary-maintaining mechanism did not work as the Spanish civil and ecclesiastical authorities intended is not surprising because colonial society possessed a mitigating element, acculturation, that worked against the system's efficiency. Spain required every individual in the society to acculturate, i.e., speak the Spanish language, obey the same laws, adhere to Catholic beliefs, fight the same enemies, and exhibit other culturally standardizing behavior. As a consequence the real or ascribed cultural characteristics of each group (casta) were not sufficiently stable to persist in the close inter-ethnic contact that

occurred on the frontier. As in other areas of New Spain, ethnic boundaries in New Mexico became blurred, causing the system to become muddled and largely ineffective. In fact, as will be seen, ecclesiastics and other officials had trouble in using the casta-categorizing nomenclature that gradually evolved. A second goal of this study is to supply a glimpse of the polyethnic origins of the group today known as the Hispanos of New Mexico.

For the purposes of this study, examination of the casta system and the concomitant development of the Hispanos as an ethnic group in northern New Mexico has to begin in the post-1693 colonial period. Although Juan de Oñate and his colonists had settled New Mexico in 1598, the Native American revolt of 1680 caused the colonists to flee to the area of El Paso del Norte, near present Cuidad Juárez. For these first eighty-two years of colonization, no extant census furnishes an ethnic breakdown of the New Mexico population, even though Fray Alonso Benavides, in his optimistic report of 1630, described the population of New Mexico as made up of Spaniards, *mestizos*, and Indians and supplied population figures for some ethnic groups.[2] In addition, France V. Scholes, the authority on seventeenth-century New Mexico, notes evidence that eighty-to-ninety percent of the early colonial population was native born and that the castas practiced exogamy (i.e., marrying outside one's group) during this period.[3] Scholes adds that "it is impossible to estimate the proportion of Spaniards, creoles and *castes*, during this period."[4] Documents mention individuals as being *mestizo* or *mulato*, but because of insufficient demographic statistics, it is difficult to speak precisely about the colonial society's ethnic makeup. Such statistical information disappeared during the 1680 revolt when the Pueblos and Apaches destroyed all of the Spanish documents left in New Mexico, severely limiting knowledge of the 1598 to 1692 period.

When Diego de Vargas reconquered the area in 1693, a new historical era began for New Mexico's Hispano population. Only a few of the families living in New Mexico during pre-revolt days returned. Others, probably disheartened by the harshness of frontier life or by the memories of the massacre of their loved ones, chose not to return. As Fray Angélico Chávez has noted, the return of New Mexico to

2. Alonso de Benavides, *Benavides' Memorial of 1630*, trans., Peter P. Forrestal, ed. Cyprian J. Lynch (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1954), 24.

3. France V. Scholes, "Civil Government and Society in New Mexico in the Seventeenth Century," *New Mexico Historical Review* 10 (April 1935), 97.

4. *Ibid.*

Spanish control after 1693 "was really a new and distinct colonization of New Mexico."[5]

Of the 187 new colonists in 1693, 45 were swarthy or of swarthy color, i.e., *trigüeno* or *color trigüeno;*[6] thus 24 percent were either castas or perhaps dark-skinned Spaniards. Looking at this group by families, 27 of the 67 families, or 40 percent, may have been castas.[7]

The 1695 muster roll, resulting from de Vargas' sending Juan Paez Hurtado to Mexico to recruit additional settlers for the colony, is even more helpful in determining the ethnicity of other new arrivals. The muster roll reveals that of the 141 persons who signed up 30 percent were classified *español*, 39 percent were *mestizo*, 11 percent were *coyote*, 11 percent were *mulato*, 2 percent were *lobos*, and 1.5 percent were *castizo*. Of the twenty-four married couples, ten were exogamous unions between castas, including four españoles who married outside of group.[8] At this very early date, then, the casta system was firmly reestablished in New Mexico.

Church records, baptismal, marriage, and burial registers for the first half of the eighteenth century, also reveal that the friars made no great effort to record the specific casta to which an individual belonged. For example, the church baptismal files for Nambé pueblo (one of the earliest existing records) from 1707 to 1727 give only the tribe or pueblo residency of the *indio* baptisms, e.g., *del pueblo de Pojoaque; de la nación Panana;* or *de la nación Apache.* For the colonizers the term español appears, but no other classification is given.[9] The same holds true for the baptismal records of Pecos between 1725 and 1744.[10] Marriage records for Santa Fe beginning in 1728 also reveal a lack of consistent classification for the castas. The Indians of the various pueblos and those belonging to the surrounding plains tribes are identified, but

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5. Angélico Chávez, *Origins of New Mexico Families in the Spanish Colonial Period in Two Parts: The Seventeenth (1598–1693) and the Eighteenth (1693–1821) Centuries* (Santa Fe: Historical Society of New Mexico, 1954), x–xi.

6. Ralph Emerson Twitchell, *The Spanish Archives of New Mexico* (2 vols., Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1914), 92–105.

7. Microfilm roll 2, Document No. 54-C, Spanish Archives of New Mexico, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe (hereafter SANM). For a discussion of this list, see: Brian Alexander Young, "The History of the Black in New Mexico From the Sixteenth Century Through the Nineteenth Century" (master's thesis, University of New Mexico, 1967).

8. Clevy Floyd Strout, "The Resettlement of Santa Fe, 1695: The Newly Found Muster Roll," *New Mexico Historical Review* 53 (July 1978), 261–70.

9. Baptismal Records, Reel 6, Archives of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe (hereafter AASF).

10. *Ibid.*

very few of the *gente de razón* (castas) are listed by the specific casta to which they belonged. The few castas clearly classified in the church records illustrate that the colonial population of New Mexico practiced exogamy.

An example of this exogamic practice is given in the following marriage entries. On October 5, 1734, in Santa Fe, it was recorded that "Estevan de Estrada [mulato servant of vicar Don Joseph de Bustamante]" married "Juana Mata de Espinoza, *India* a free widow . . .";[11] on May 6, 1741 Juan de la Vega, *collote* (coyote) married Margarita de Bustamante whose casta was not given.[12] After 1750 the casta of the bride and groom were listed more frequently, but many persons were still not ethnically categorized. Since most friars were also responsible for villages surrounding their missions, they conscientiously included the name of the village in which the persons were *vecinos* (residents), and thus the classification was used more frequently than terms for varied castas. Listing the village in which the individual resided was useful to the friars in identifying persons properly and in distinguishing between individuals with the same name. For example, Juan Pino (de Truchas) could readily be differentiated from Juan Pino (de Pecos). In addition, the Spanish government used physical descriptions to identify individuals, e.g., Juan José Domínguez, of ruddy complexion, with a full dark beard, and a scar over his left eye. The casta designation could have also been used to supply this proper identification.

Since so many settlers were not identified by casta category, they were probably members of the more acceptable castas such as mestizo. This assumption can be made because, given the importance placed on being español, families who claimed that category would have made certain that the friars noted their status in their records. Some friars, however, seem not to have cared to add the casta designation. They differentiated only when listing Indians. They probably did so because they wanted to demonstrate to their religious superiors in Mexico that the Indians were indeed being converted and receiving the sacraments, thus revealing successful missionizing activity. Moreover, perhaps taking for granted that villagers knew the family, the friars did not bother with designating the casta—unless it was español or indio.

During the last quarter of the eighteenth century, mention of the castas in records become more frequent. Possibly this happened because of the *Concilio IV Provincial Mexicano* (1771), which decreed that

11. *Ibid.* Marriage Records, reel 31, frame 21, AASF. This entry is of interest because it illustrates that the secular clergy also kept slaves or *criados*. Author's translation.

12. Marriage Records, reel 31, frame 36, AASF.

all parishioners must be classified according to their family status, i.e., single, married, or widowed and also according to their casta *"españoles, indios, negros, mulatos and other mixtures. . . ."*[13] This law applied to all official business conducted with the church, including baptismal, confirmation, marriage, and burial registers. One reason for the issuance of this decree may have been that anyone aspiring to the priesthood had to give evidence of being puro español.

Still, demographic statistics for this period continued to give only the broad categories. Nor did churchmen making official visits to northern New Mexico and citing its population statistics break down the population into castas. Bishop Pedro Tamarón y Romeral, whose canonical visit occurred in 1760, for example, states that the "villa of Santa Fe had 379 families of citizens of Spanish and mixed blood. . . ."[14] The only casta he identifies is the *genízaros* when he mentions Abiquiú and other villages where genízaro Indian families lived.[15]

In 1776 the Mexican superiors of Friar Francisco Atanasio Domínguez assigned him the task of making a canonical visit to all the churches and missions of New Mexico. From this visit came the most detailed and extant description of these edifices and of general aspects of New Mexican society of that period. In his instructions Fray Francisco was to distinguish among "españoles, de razón, and indios."[16] Domínguez did not precisely carry out his orders, for in giving the population of the Villa of Santa Fe, he distinguished only between Spanish families and genízaro families. In reporting the census figures for the satellite villages of Santa Fe—Quemado, Cieneguilla, and Rio de Tesuque—he provided a breakdown only by family, including the number of individuals in each unit.[17]

In describing the citizens of Santa Cruz de la Canada, Friar Domínguez mentioned that a majority *could be taken for Spaniards*, suggesting that the castas considered themselves to be "Spanish" or were "whitened" enough to be classified as such. That Domínguez was conscious of the status of the persons whom he considered to be castas is

13. León, *Las Castas*, 15–16. Author's translation.

14. Eleanor B. Adams, ed., *Bishop Tamarón's Visitation of New Mexico, 1760* (Albuquerque: Historical Society of New Mexico, 1954), 46.

15. *Ibid.*, 64.

16. Legajo 10, Number 86, Biblioteca Nacional de México (hereafter BNM), Special Collections, Zimmerman Library, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque. For a translation of Domínguez' report, see Adams and Fray Angélico Chávez, ed. and trans., *The Missions of New Mexico, 1776: A Description by Fray Francisco Anastacio Domínguez with other Contemporary Documents* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1956).

17. Legajo 10, Number 86, BNM.

clear in his description of the vecinos of the village of Las Trampas, whom he describes as *"gente baja,"* i.e., people of low class.[18] The 1790 census confirms that castas predominantly inhabited Trampas[19] and thus in Domínguez' eyes merited such opprobrium.

Friar Domínguez' report is thus helpful in understanding that some castas were probably passing themselves off for Spaniards (commonly done in the frontier provinces of New Spain), apparently hoping to improve their upward social mobility. This revelation, however, is not helpful in determining the demographic composition of each casta. The report also clearly illustrates the patronizing attitude of some españoles towards the castas.

Next, in September 1800, friars and secular priests making out the report required by the Junta del Gobierno del Real Consulado de Guadalajara also combined españoles and gente de razón,[20] although they were not consistent in their nomenclature. For instance, Friar Vergara, reporting on Sandia pueblo, distinguished only between indios and españoles, while Friar Merino reporting for Pecos used "indios and españoles y gentes de otras clases."[21] Father José Bibian de Ortega, secular curate of Santa Fe, noted that the Villa of Santa Fe had "three thousand sixty nine inhabitants of all classes." Here genízaros, as newly acculturated Indians descended from *"varias naciones,"* were seemingly being considered Catholic neophytes and indios, and thus not constituting a legal casta category.[22]

Although census-takers for the civil government during the first half of the eighteenth century also made little effort to classify society by casta, a few of the friars did note in the census of 1750 the ethnicity of a portion of the population. In fact, the census offers indisputable evidence that the society consisted of españoles and castas and that the two groups were mixing ethnically.[23] The census-takers did not specify, however, the ethnicity of the residents for most of the villages. Indian pueblos such as Taos, where Tanos and Apaches were listed as living among the Taos, constitute an exception. In some areas, such as the village complex of Nuestra Senora de la Soledad del Rio del

18. *Ibid.*

19. Reel 12, frame 500, SANM.

20. Varios Documentos, 1800 (Bundled documents dated 1800.) Archives of the Archdiocese of Durango, Mexico (hereafter AAD).

21. *Ibid.* Author's translation.

22. For a brief study of the *genízaro,* see Steven M. Horvath, Jr., "The Genízaro of Eighteenth-Century New Mexico: A Reexamination," *Discovery* (Santa Fe: School of American Research, 1977), 25–40.

23. Legajo 8, Number 81, BNM.

Norte Arriba, genízaro families were also singled out. Fifteen genízaro families were enumerated and may well have been the vecinos of Abiquiú.

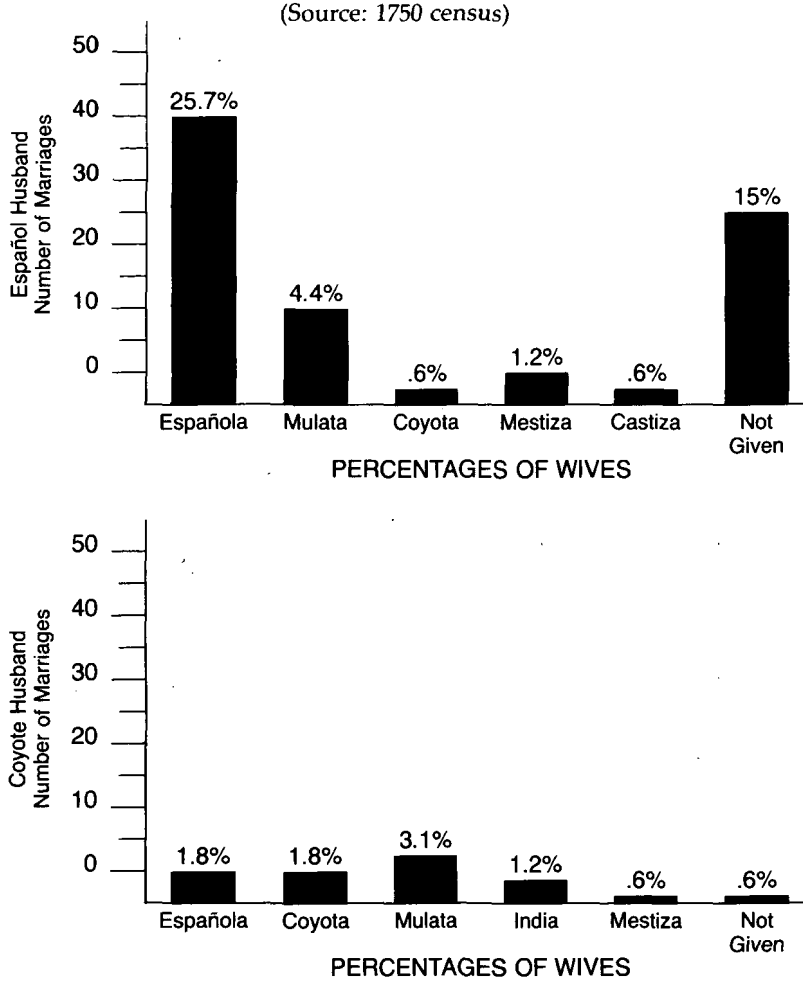
The most revealing section concerning the casta system in New Mexico is that enumerating Albuquerque. Here Fray José Yrigoyen included the casta designation of a majority of the adults. An analysis of marriage partners that Albuquerque males chose, for whom Fray Yrigoyen gives a casta or español designation clarifies a good deal (Figures 1 and 2). First, the trend among españoles was towards endogamy, although they did not strictly adhere to this practice. Second, after españolas, español males preferred *mulatas* (and *mulatos* preferred *españolas*). These two combinations make up 10 percent of the sampling. Third, indios vecinos preferred indias. Fourth, other castas mentioned in the census were fairly evenly represented in the figures. Also included in this section of the census, but not indicated in Figures 1 and 2, were the marriages of mestizos with coyota—one; lobo with china—two; and lobo with coyota—two. This small sampling from Fray Yrigoyen illustrates that on the frontiers of New Spain physical unions between whites, Indians, and blacks, begun in the Caribbean and Mexico, were continuing. Even more accurate statistics on castas are available in the 1790 census.

The 1790 census is the most complete, most useful one taken during the Spanish colonial period. This enumeration includes the names of husband and wife or head of household and occupation, and, more important for this study, the ethnicity of listed adults. Unfortunately, children's names are not given, with only their sex and age listed. In her exhaustive analysis of this census, Alicia Tjarks gives the following breakdown for some of the major areas of New Mexico. (See Table 2: notice El Paso is eliminated from her table.)[24] My analysis of the jurisdiction of the Villa of Santa Fe, including its satellite villages, yields the statistics in Table 3.

These breakdowns clearly indicate that nomenclature used to describe castas depended on the individual census-taker. For example, the Santa Fe jurisdiction is the only area where the census-taker uses *color quebrado* (broken color), i.e., persons not pure Caucasian. Apparently the recorder thought it was impossible to determine precisely the casta of these individuals, or perhaps he was not troubled with his

24. Tjarks, "Demographic Structure," 83. For a total of New Mexico's population in 1790, see Sherburne F. Cook and Woodrow Borah, *Essays in Population History: Mexico and the Caribbean* (2 vols., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 214–15, 220–23.

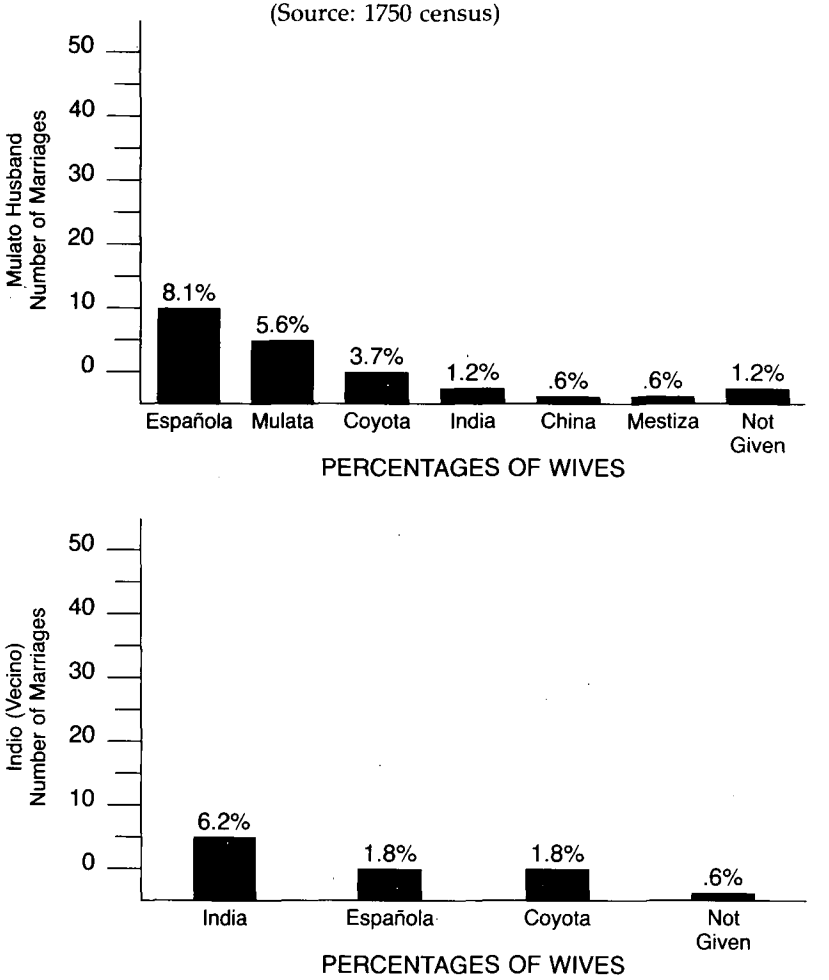
Figure 1
Casta Mate Choice in Albuquerque
(Source: 1750 census)



categories as long as he indicated that residents were not españoles or indios vecinos by using color quebrado. Although probably not a pejorative term, it did connote a status lower than español. Despite the imprecision of these reported ethnic categories (no more imprecise in New Mexico than in the other areas of New Spain[25]), one should attempt to understand what friars and officials meant when they used these various ethnic categories.

25. Mörner, *Race Mixture*, 58.

Figure 2
Casta Mate Choice in Albuquerque
(Source: 1750 census)



Obviously, in the polyethnic society of the New World, español was considered the highest category of status. Consequently, one can assume that individuals strove to achieve that status. This category would include not only those who were genetically Spaniards but also those who claimed to be Spaniards by ascription. Self-ascribed Spaniards probably had to be considered among the upper class colonial society to be accepted as Spanish. It certainly follows that if influential Jews living in Spain could have their ethnic classification changed,

Table 2
***Español* and *Casta* Population in New Mexico 1790**

	Spanish		Indian		Mestizo*		Mulato		Undetermined	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Albuquerque	2,079	46.64	621	14.46	1,703	38.24	7	0.15	23	0.51
Santa Fe, Tesuque, and Pecos	1,476	53.84	456	16.56	706	25.75	70	2.55	33	1.30
Santa Cruz, San Juan and Picuris**	2,525	58.57	590	13.68	1,113	25.81			83	1.94
TOTALS***	6,080	52.93	1,667	14.51	3,522	30.60	77	.67	139	1.21

*Tjarks includes *coyotes* and *color quebrado* in this category
**Note that the Taos area is not included.
***Totals were not included in Tjarks's table.

Table 3
***Español* and *Casta* Population in Santa Fe 1790**

Españoles		Indios and Vecinos		Mestizos		Coyotes		Color Quebrado		Genízaros		Mulatos		Undetermined	
No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
1,719	57.10	113	3.75	225	7.40	20	.66	411	13.65	49	1.60	79	2.60	394	13.00

Source: Alicia V. Tjarks, *Demographic Structure of New Mexico*, 83.

influential members of castas in frontier colonies could also change classification.[26]

Clearly, direct immigration of Spaniards and other Europeans to New Mexico was very light during the eighteenth century.[27] Indeed, most of the colonists from Spain lived in Mexico for a while before migrating to New Mexico. Some married or cohabited with indios producing the mestizo casta.

The mestizo classification probably followed general usage in New Spain. It indicated that an individual's parents were español and indio, though by the late eighteenth century, mestizo had lost its specific one-half and one-half meaning and came to refer generally to racial mixtures. Since mestizo, next to español, was the most desirable status, the 1790 census reveals, not surprisingly, that 22 percent of New Mexico's population was classified mestizo. Those who could not become español probably settled for this next best ethnic identity available to them.

The next category was that of coyote. This classification seems to be an ascriptive ethnic category, i.e., a descriptive term used for persons by other groups as opposed to self-identifying (self-ascriptive) terms. Unfortunately, no clue exists in the Santa Fe Archdiocesan church or Spanish government records to indicate the origin of this term or its precise local meaning when employed to classify a group of people.

In his exhaustive study of the castas in colonial Mexico, Nicolás León asserts that coyote is a *"mexicanismo* derived from the *nahuatl coyotl* (*canis latrans Harlen*) or jackal. The hair is grayish yellow. White and Indian dominate this *casta.* To José Alzate y Ramírez *coyote* is synonymous with *mestizo."*[28] But the domination of both white and Indian blood is not readily clear in the ethnic mixtures León cites from other colonial works to explain the usage of coyote in Mexico.[29] These other

26. For an example of an influential Jew changing his ethnic classification, see McAlister, "Social Structure," 353.

27. Tjarks, "Demographic Structure," 83.

28. León, *Las Castas,* 22.

29. León gives a long explanation of the term *coyote* that helps one understand how confusing casta nomenclature could be. On p. 40 he gives the genetic origin of a *coyote* as *mestizo* × *indio* = *coyote.* Since a mestizo should be one-half Spanish and one-half Indian, coyote is only one-quarter Spanish with Indian blood predominating. However, León also gives other sources indicating that a coyote could also have black blood. He cites the following examples: *mulato* × *mestizo* = *quarteron* and *quarteron* × *mestizo* = *coyote* (p. 39). The term quarteron comes from the one-quarter each of Indian and black that the quarteron possesses. The rest of his ethnic balance would be made up of 50 percent Spanish, which differs from the cases cited above. In this case the offspring coyote, from quarteron and mestizo, is ethnically half Spanish and one-eighth black and

works do bear out, however, that coyote usually referred to a person about one quarter Spanish and with some black heritage. Clearly, then, coyote was as imprecise as other terms used for the castas.

Judging all this evidence, the term coyote in New Mexico usually meant a mixture of Spaniard and Indian or black. In a parallel situation in 1785, Fray José Francisco López, reporting on the mission of San Antonio de Valero in Texas, referred to "*mulatos* and *mestizos* (who are called *coyotes* in this country)."[30] The widespread use of these terms may suggest that true mestizos wished to be distinguished from persons they considered less Spanish than themselves.

In New Mexico, Fray Antonio Barrera made an ambiguous statement about coyotes. When making his report to the Junta del Gobierno del Real Consulado de Guadalajara in 1801 he stated that among the Indians of San Felipe "live three families of Indians who are already *coyotes* [*entre ellos viven tres familias ya coyotes*].[31] Did he mean that these Indian families had mixed ethnically with the españoles and thus could be considered coyotes, or did he suggest that they had acculturated sufficiently to be considered coyotes? Probably he meant the former since as gente de razón they would have already been acculturated. Whatever his exact meaning, Fray Antonio implied that categorizing someone as coyote could be a step upwards on the social scale. This being the case, it is not surprising that the term became as acceptable as mestizo.

Later evidence suggests that coyote supplanted mestizo in New Mexico, as it did in Texas. For example, in his census report of 1860 for the Santa Fe area, Charles Blumner utilizes "M/IND" as the ethnic classification for an individual, then explains that "M/IND means mixed white and Indian, called by the Mexicans 'coyote.'"[32] Today, coyote is generally used for the offspring of Anglos and Hispanos or Mexican

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three-eighths Indian. León also gives the following combination: *barcino* × *mulato* = *coyote* (p. 56). A barcino comes from *mulato* × *albarazado*. Another survey in Hensley Woodbridge "Glossary of Names Used in Colonial Latin America for Crosses among Indians, Negroes and Whites," *Journal of the Washington Academy of Sciences* 38 (1948), 357, shows that none of the various mixtures used for the classification coyote ever had less than 25 percent Spanish blood with the range being 25 to 75 percent.

30. Fray José Francisco López, "Report and Account that the Father President of the Missions in the Province of Texas or New Philippines Sends to the Most Illustrious Senor Rafael Jose Verger" in Ernest Wallace and David Vigness, eds., *Documents of Texas History* (Austin: Steck, 1963), 29.

31. Varios Documentos, 1801, AAD.

32. 1860 Census of the United States of America, 6, dwelling 31, household 36. Microfilm copy, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe.

Americans, although, as previously noted, the inclusion of black blood is a possibility.

The smallest population in the 1790 census was the mulato casta. Blacks and the mulatos came to New Mexico very early in the colonial period, with Gaspar de Villagrá mentioning mulatos as a casta accompanying Oñate in 1598.[33] France V. Scholes also notes the existence of mulatos in New Mexico during the seventeenth century.[34]

In the eighteenth century, mulatos seem never to have exceeded 2.5 percent of a population of 15,045 non-Indians in the New Mexican districts, excluding El Paso.[35] This group includes only one lobo.[36] Those listed are free mulatos, including a very few servants. Although a small minority, the mulatos are highly "visible" in these documents. The most notable of the mulatos is Sebastián Rodríguez, who came to New Mexico as Diego de Vargas' drummer and town crier and seems to have started a large family in New Mexico.[37] Because of his occupation he was known as *"El Tambor."*[38] Sebastián's son Esteban succeeded his father as drummer and town crier, and his brother Melchior helped to found Trampas.[39] Overall the 1790 census indicates that in seventy-six of the provinces eighty-six mulatos were living in the jurisdiction of Santa Fe, most of whom seemed to reside in the Barrio de Analco.[40] Other documents mention court proceedings against mulatos for livestock theft, assault, and hexing, thus suggesting that mulatos were a conspicuous part of society.

Although persons genetically Negroid were considered members of the lowest castas, mestizos, coyotes, or color quebrados may also have belonged to the same casta, but they had been able to "whiten" themselves through intermarriage or by misleading the census-takers. Such actions may have led Pedro Baptista Pino to report to the Spanish Cortes in 1811 that "in New Mexico there are no castas of people of African origin."[41] Possibly, too, he was an astute politician willing to

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33. Gilberto Espinosa and F. W. Hodge, trans., *History of New Mexico by Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá Alcala 1610* (Los Angeles: Quivira Society, 1933), 282–83.

34. France V. Scholes, "Troublous Times in New Mexico," *New Mexico Historical Review* 12 (April 1937), 140.

35. Tjarks, "Demographic Structure," 83.

36. *Ibid.*

37. Chávez, *Origins of New Mexico Families*, 270.

38. Twitchell, *Spanish Archives of New Mexico* 2, Number 77.

39. Chávez, *Origins of New Mexico Families*, 270.

40. Roll 21, frames 383–89, SANM.

41. Pedro Baptista Pino, *Exposición Sucinta y Sencilla de la Provincia del Nuevo Mejico*, in H. Bailey Carroll and J. Villasana Haggard, *Three New Mexico Chronicles* (Albuquerque: Quivira Society, 1942), 243.

tell the Cortes what it wanted to hear to obtain requested favors for New Mexico. This conclusion is based also on his attempt to picture the Pueblo Indians (those living in their own villages) in a positive light by arguing they were nearly indistinguishable from the Spaniards. All these documentary mentionings suggest that the mulatos contributed noticeably to the genetic make-up of New Mexican society.

Another noteworthy category was the indios vecinos. Although not considered a separate casta, these indios had been acculturated into Hispanic society, were distinguished from other indios through the term vecino, and were considered separate from genízaros. Early in the eighteenth century indios vecinos may have been Mexican Indians accompanying new colonists, but later in the same century they seem to have been former members of the surrounding nomadic tribes or natives no longer living in their pueblos.[42] The 1790 census lists 473 persons (4.2 percent of New Mexico's population) among this group. Making up the fourth largest population group, indios vecinos resided primarily in the jurisdiction of Santa Fe and San Juan pueblo. In addition to the 52 percent living in those two areas, others were spread throughout the colony.

At this point, the Village of San Miguel del Vado will be used to illustrate the sometimes confusing and inconsistent use of the casta by the friars during the late colonial period, a misuse that led to the demise of the system. The San Miguel del Vado land grant, located approximately forty miles from Santa Fe, was on the banks of the Pecos River, and issued by Governor Fernando de Chacón to a group of fifty-six petitioners on November 25, 1794.[43] Although San Miguel del Vado has long been considered a genízaro town, a close review of the baptismal records of San Miguel reveals that only ten of the forty-two original settlers identified were clearly genízaros.[44] In fact, between 1794 and 1817, when nearly all type of casta designation disappeared, only nineteen of the baptized children are identified as genízaros.

On the other hand, it seems españoles, whether valid or self-ascribed, were always identified, as were the indios. The great majority of individuals, however, are identified only as vecinos, sometimes as

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42. Twitchell, *Spanish Archives of New Mexico* 1, Number 512, gives evidence that the *"indios mexicanos"* were considered a separate group during the early eighteenth century. In 1727 Don Salvador Montoya, Regidor de la Villa de Santa Fe, in his last will and testament says that a piece of land that he owned was bounded "on the west by the lands of the Mexicans." Author's translation.

43. Surveyor General of New Mexico Reports, file 49, report 119, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe.

44. Roll 6, frame 666, AASF.

vecino del Vado, or just as vecino. Vecino clearly identified those who were considered full members of the Hispano society, even though the term's exact meaning referred to a resident and citizen of a specified town.

Unfortunately, the four friars enumerating New Mexicans were inconsistent even among themselves in making ethnic classifications, as were most other friars in New Mexico. Although Fray Diego Martínez, who served at Pecos pueblo from 1800 to 1804 and who was also responsible for San Miguel del Vado, seems careful in identifying españoles, he used vecino (resident of San Miguel del Vado) for other persons. Serving the same parish from 1804 to 1810 and again from 1818–1825, Fray Francisco Bragado used only español, genízaro, and indio. During 1810, the last year of his residency as pastor, he began to use *"del bado"* [sic], but when he returned in 1818 he used genízaro for only one entry and did not specify either a casta category or vecino for the remainder of the baptismal entries.

Still another priest, Fray Juan Bruno Gonzalez, who served only one year from March 1810 to March 1811, distinguished between only the settlers of San Miguel and those of San José del Vado, the new satellite settlement up river from San Miguel. Only one ethnic entry is included in his records, *india de Pecos.* Of course, by this time entries for the Pecos pueblo were becoming fewer and fewer because Pecos, once the mightiest of all the pueblos, was in its final stages of collapse.[45]

The most inconsistent in his use of ethnic terms, however, was Fray Antonio García del Valle, who replaced Friar Gonzalez and served until 1818. He employed español, mestizo, indio, and, surprisingly enough *castiza* once, possibly one of the few times it was used in New Mexico. In his fourth entry, on March 14, 1811, Father García states that he baptized María Francisca Paula de Jesus, castiza, daughter of Santiago Aragon and María Matiana Salaz, mestizos. For the children of other mestizos, however, he uses mestizo. Since a castiza, according to casta lists, denotes the offspring of an español-mestizo union, Fray Antonio was not utilizing this categorization as it was normally employed in Mexico. Possibly the Aragones complained that their daughter should be classified as español because on July 9, 1807, Friar Bragado had previously baptized María's older sister and had listed her as española. To conjecture, perhaps the compromise was to classify María as castiza.

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45. John L. Kessell, *Kiva, Cross and Crown: The Pecos Indians and New Mexico 1540–1840* (Washington: National Park Service/U.S. Department of the Interior, 1979), 413–63.

Another case of inconsistency concerned José Miguel Brito, one of the original San Miguel grantees. In 1808 Friar Bragado had listed Brito as a genízaro, but in 1811 to Friar del Valle mentions José as just a vecino. Later, in 1814, del Valle categorizes Brito as an *"Yndio"* [sic]. Of course, one does not know whether these categorizations depended on a colonist's being in or out of the good graces of the friar.

From 1812 on, Friar del Valle primarily uses "del Vado" in his entries. Still, when the priest came to entries for the Esparza and Tapia families, he sharpened his quill, used his best penmanship, and categorized these individuals españoles, noticeably employing the polite don and doña for the parents. This exceptional treatment indicated the high social status of these families.

By the latter half of the eighteenth and the early years of the nineteenth centuries, society was mixing genetically, and clear racial categories had become blurred on the frontier. Several incidents occurring at this time, however, leave no doubt about the second-class status of the castas.

For instance, in 1766 a Joseph Baca was recommended to serve as *teniente politico* because he "knows how to read and write and is recognized as a white man."[46] Two years later, Governor Pedro Lara Mendinueta, tired of receiving complaints from farmers regarding the theft of their produce, issued a decree that stated:

> If a man or woman, boy or girl is found with stolen produce or in the act of stealing produce from someone's garden and if that person is of broken color, he or she shall receive twenty-five lashes at the pillory. *If the person is white* he or she shall [only] be tied to the same pillory with the shameful stolen produce hung around the neck.[47]

Obviously, a more severe punishment was meted out to the casta. Here, too, color quebrado stands for a catchall category for the castas. That the coyote was considered inferior to the español is demonstrated by a statement in 1819 concerning an altercation between a coyote and Manuel Vigil over irrigation water. Vigil felt that as an español and a soldier, judgment should be rendered in his favor because "a coyote is inferior to a Spaniard who is also a soldier."[48]

In short, colonists of the Spanish crown came into New Mexico as an ethnically diverse group, representing a genetic mixing begun

46. Roll 9, frame 962, SANM. Author's emphasis and translation.
47. Roll 10, frame 402, SANM. Author's emphasis and translation.
48. Number 2846, SANM 2. Author's translation.

Illustrations from Señor Don Pedro Alonso O'Crouley, *A Description of The Kingdom of New Spain,* trans. and ed. Seán Galvin (San Francisco: John Howell Books, 1972).

Illustrations from Señor Don Pedro Alonso O'Crouley, *A Description of The Kingdom of New Spain*, trans. and ed. Seán Galvin (San Francisco: John Howell Books, 1972).

in Mexico. Furthermore, in New Mexico, the genes of the Pueblos and the nomadic tribes added other ingredients. The term genízaro became useful in identifying those who were not ethnically casta, as did the term indio vecino. Español was the category of status, and some families, possessing status legitimately, attempted to protect it through the practice of endogamy. Españoles also protected their status by trying to make certain their position was noted in church transactions, probably to the amusement of the friars if the individual demonstrated color quebrado. However, since most colonists were members of the same culture, love and passion among members of the society would not be denied. The castas, and even some who were or called themselves españoles, practiced exogamy so that by the end of the Spanish period these inter-racial marriages and liaisons had formed a genetically homogeneous population from the three great trunks of humanity—the Caucasoid, the Mongoloid, and the Negroid races.[49]

In 1821 when Mexico won its independence from Spain, and the Plan of Iguala gave equality to all citizens and in effect eliminated the casta system, one might assume that any further references to the system would have been eliminated because casta connoted inferior citizenship. Surprisingly this was not the case in New Mexico. The census of 1823 divides the population into españoles eligible to exercise their rights as citizens and those not eligible. Other categories included indios, eligible to exercise their rights as citizens and those ineligible, and finally *pardos*, eligible to exercise their rights as citizens and those not eligible. Since social habits die slowly, especially in isolated frontiers, the mention of español and indio could be explained in that way. However, most surprising is the use of "pardo" to categorize a segment of the population.[50]

From a careful reading of the census one can infer that the term pardo (meaning literally gray) was a one-word substitute for the casta nomenclature in use during the colonial period.[51] The casta that pardo designated usually were people of black or part-black descent.[52] The term had also become more common in other parts of New Spain, and by the latter part of the eighteenth century it was replacing "negro" and "mulato" in official documents.[53] The terms had apparently not

49. Tjarks, "Demographic Structure," 72.

50. Felipe Tena Ramírez, *Leyes Fundamentales de México, 1808–1956* (Mexico: Editorial Porrúa, 1957), 115. The author wishes to thank Dr. Myra Ellen Jenkins for showing him that this term was still used in the 1823 census.

51. Roll 3, frames 217–18, Mexican Archives of New Mexico.

52. Cook and Borah, *Essays*, 2, 464.

53. McAlister, "Social Structure," 368.

been used in New Mexico, however, until this period.[54] Why was it being used now? This question is difficult to answer, but some assumptions can be made.

On February 1, 1795, a *cedula* authorized pardo and *quinterones* to contract matrimony with whites, permitted them to hold public office, and allowed them to enter Holy Orders.[55] This fact, coupled with a bulletin issued by Generalissimo Augustín de Iturbide of Mexico that the present "organic law [Spanish Constitution of Cadiz 1812] should remain in force so far as it was in harmony with the independence of Mexico until her representatives adopted new institutions," may shed some light on the issue.[56] By 1822, when the census was being taken, Mexico still lacked a constitution; therefore the census-taker may have wanted to lift the status of *infame* (opprobrium) from the castas in New Mexico and thus may have chosen to use this term. On the other hand, one might argue that the census-taker was insulting the castas in New Mexico by intimating that they possessed black ethnic ancestry. This last argument is weakened, however, by the reference in the census to *derechos de cuidadanos* (rights of citizens). The cedula of 1795, as we have seen, granted certain rights to pardos, and the constitution of 1812 "left the door open to" persons of "African" ancestry to become citizens with derechos.[57] Thus, it would not have behooved the census-taker to insult the castas in this manner.

Here, then, was the last gasp of the casta system in New Mexico. During the Mexican period (1821–1846) the only categorizations utilized were indio and genízaro, categories technically not considered castas. In this era, the change to *mexicano* as the principal ethnic categorization must have been a momentous and positive transformation for those who had previously been identified as castas.

Considering this complex and convoluted ethnic history of New Mexico, is it surprising that doña Seferina Quintana of Pecos, age 90, could recently state, in what may have been the collective unconscious at work, "the matter was never resolved. Some say we are Spanish, others that we are Indians, and others that we are Mexicans."[58]

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54. A more thorough search of the Spanish Archives of New Mexico may reveal a few of these terms, but they would be highly exceptional.

55. McAlister, "Social Structure," 368.

56. William Spence Robertson, *Iturbide of Mexico* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1952), 96.

57. Ramírez, *Leyes*, 63.

58. Interview with doña Seferina Quintana, Pecos, 1977. Author's translation.

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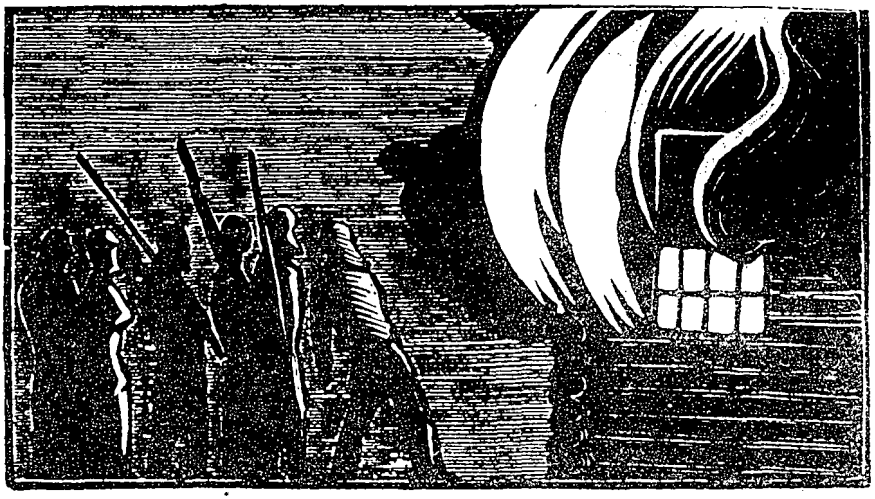

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